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Called to the Work of Studying

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JOHN PECKHAM



Theology and truth are more important than many think, requiring discipleship of the mind.

Called to the Work of Studying

She was running hard, rushing to a meeting and pushing a carriage containing her infant son. She made it just in time to board the bus. When the bus reached her stop, she rushed off just as quickly as she had rushed on. But she forgot one thing. Her infant son.

Thankfully, she later caught up with the bus, and her son was fine. In her rush to an urgent appointment, she forgot that which was of far greater importance—her child!

Focusing on the urgent sometimes causes us to lose sight of the important. How often do you step back from the daily grind and ponder the big questions of life? It is all too easy to be caught up in the busyness of life and fail to stop and reflect on what matters most (one of many reasons I am thankful for the gift of the Sabbath).

One might be so heavenly minded that one is of no earthly good—as the saying goes. Likewise, one might become so caught up in mundane matters that one forgets that momentous celestial events are occurring not only in heaven but here and now (typically invisible to us, but real all the same—see, e.g., 2 Kings 6:14-17).

Scripture calls us to look beyond what seems urgent to the truly important, beyond the short term to the long view, remembering that this life is not all there is.

The meaning we invest in today is not all the meaning there is. The sufferings of today are temporary; pain and death will one day be no more. Death, the last enemy (1 Cor. 15:26), will be vanquished. Christ came to defeat death through the cross (see Heb. 2:14), and soon He will eradicate death—forevermore.

This issue of *Adventist Review* focuses on the state of the dead, one of the pillars of Adventist faith, which are bound together by the broader story of the cosmic conflict over *who* is good and *what* is true.

In direct contrast to Satan—the father of lies (see John 8:44)—Jesus came “into the world: to testify to the truth” (John 18:37, NASB). Theology and truth are more important than many think, requiring discipleship of the mind.

Our pioneers understood this well. Ellen White warned, “It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the human mind.”¹ “There are dangerous heresies that will be presented as Bible doctrines; and we are to become acquainted with the Bible so that we may know how to meet them. The faith of every individual will be tested, and everyone will pass through a trial of close criticism.”²

Should we not, then, devote great time and resources to making sure we are firmly rooted in biblical teachings? “God calls every one, both old and young, to make a diligent search in His word, that they may discover the rich jewels of truth. . . . All [are] called to the work of studying the Bible.”³

Today more than ever, our people need to see the beauty not only of the various theological points to which we assent, but of how those pieces fit together to form a grand picture of who God is, how He loves us, what has gone wrong, what God is doing to fix it, and the part He calls us to play alongside Him (among many other components).

Let us not wait until tragedy or crisis confronts us to ponder the most important matters of life and death. Let us commit ourselves to discipleship of our minds—feasting on Scripture toward “bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5). ♣

¹ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946), p. 589.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 590, 591.

³ Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Sabbath School Work* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub Assn., 1938), p. 28.